

February 28, 2011

Dear Members of the Appropriations Committee,

As we listen to faculty and students present reasons for not cutting funding for public higher education in Connecticut, I am reminded of a conversation I had with a friend in graduate school. It was on one of those days when the workload seemed overwhelming and it is tempting to think there has to be an easier way to pursue a dream than this. I expressed my frustration with how slowly my research was advancing and how much schoolwork I had to complete during the upcoming weekend. Her response to me, was to take the time to "appreciate the gift of education." She said, "Education is one of the only things we do in our life that is truly for ourselves". As a first generation American citizen she discussed how lucky we were to have had the choice to pursue our own education and how for her parents as well as many others in different countries and cultures education was not an option.

We now live in a society in which many do not place great value on learning, personal growth, and education. As faculty we work to capture student interest while competing against all forms of technologic communications, interests of family and friends and work/life obligations. We do everything we can to help them realize the value of their own education and what it means for them in their personal lives, for employment and for the development of the knowledge and skills necessary to be successful in today's society.

In 1984, Roger Heyns wrote an article entitled "Education and Society: a complex interaction" for American Education, he stated, "Social historians have reminded us that schools both reflect and influence society. They are established to serve the needs that society has identified. Society decides who is to attend, for how long and for what kinds of experiences."

My concern is that as this Connecticut's budget crises in large part reflects changes that have taken place over the past few decades including the loss of manufacturing and production jobs, the increase in technology and communication based jobs What do we want Connecticut to look like 10-20 years? Do we want Connecticut to be a hotbed of new ideas, ingenuity and confidence? If so, then now more than ever we need to foster those traits in our young citizens.

Please know that the decisions you make to support or reduce funding of public higher education send a clear message to Connecticut citizens. Remember, a society protects what it values!

Respectfully Submitted,

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President, SCSU Faculty Senate

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